DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 136 377 EA 009 292

AUTHOR Blanchard, Paul D.; Kline, Robert L.
TITLE The Importance of Regionalism in the Decision-Making Style of Local Boards of Education.
PUB DATE Mar 77
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the "Conference on the Urban South: Perspectives and Retrospectives" (Charleston, South Carolina, March 25-26, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; *Board Administrator Relationship; *Boards of Education; *Conflict; *Decision Making; Elementary Secondary Education; Females; Geographic Regions; Political Influences; *School Superintendents; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS Regionalism; *United States (South)

ABSTRACT

This study examines some of the characteristics of decision-making on school boards, focusing on the behavior of southern school board members in comparison with their counterparts in other regions of the country. Data were collected in 1975 at the convention of the National School Boards Association (NSBA). Self-administered questionnaires were randomly distributed by the NSBA staff members to board members and superintendents. This procedure generated a sample of 1,091 school board members and 116 superintendents. Three areas of board decisional behavior are studied--representation and representativeness, including the degree of representation of women on the board and whether the members of the boards view themselves as representatives or trustees and whether they view the board as more like a corporation board or like a legislature; accessibility to groups and the public; and the decision-making style of the board. The latter topic is concerned with two broad areas--whether the superintendent or the board is dominant and whether the board is bipolar, unipolar, nonpolar, or concealed in its decisional conflicts. Generally, school board politics in the South is different from that found in other regions in several important ways. (Author/IRT)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED136377

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Importance of Regionalism in the Decision-Making Style of Local Boards of Education

by

Paul D. Blanchard
Robert L. Kline
Eastern Kentucky University

Prepared for presentation at the "Conference on the Urban South: Perspectives and Retrospectives," Charleston, South Carolina, March 25-26, 1977

EA 009 292

The manner in which local boards of education make decisions has been a topic of study for a number of years among scholars in the field of educational administration.[1] More recently, social science researchers have begun to examine the decisional behavior of local school boards.[2] Political Scientists in particular have increasingly devoted their research efforts toward the study of school boards[3] since school boards are so obviously involved in politics, i.e., the making of authoritative decisions which affect large numbers of people. In fact, of the two most comprehensive studies of school board decision-making to be completed in recent years, one was written by two political scientists[4] and the other relied heavily on political science research.[5]

The present study represents a continuing effort on the part of the authors to examine school boards, especially Southern school boards, from a political perspective. In an earlier study of boards in Kentucky and Florida,[6] we found that the school board decision-making process is dominated by the school superintendent. Not only were superintendents dominant in all areas of the decision-making process, but they were most dominant in the more crucial areas of what is to be taught, who is to teach, and where the educational dollar is to be spent. These findings were not unexpected in light of earlier research which suggested that school board members will defer to the professional expertise of school administrators on most issues rather than exercise their own independent judgment.[7]

We also found that among Florida and Kentucky school board members, the obligation to express the views of a constituency seemed to be much less developed than among other elected officials like city councilmen and state legislators. Using the language of legislative research, we found an overwhelming proportion of "trustees" and very few "delegates."[8] Finally, we found relatively high levels of internal conflict on school boards in these two states, which was somewhat unexpected

in view of earlier research, which emphasized cohesive behavior on boards of education, as well as the literature written for school boards members, which stressed the need to avoid intra-board conflict at all costs.[9] Unlike many writers of educational administration texts, we interpret the presence of conflict to be generally healthy and productive for school boards, since it seems to reflect a more open, conscientious, and deliberative process of decision-making.[10]

In this study, we propose to examine some of these characteristics of decision-making, along with others, focusing on the behavior of Southern school board members in comprison with their counterparts in other regions of the country. While there are a few studies that examine the regional dimension of school board behavior, they do so in a very limited way, usually in discussions of racial issues.[11] This is the first study of which we are aware which uses region as a major independent variable in the study of decision-making by local boards of education.

After a brief description of the study sample and data collection procedures, we will examine three dimensions of school board decisional behavior: (1) Representation and Representativeness; (2) Access to Groups and the Public; (3) Decision-Making and Power Relationships. In each case, Southern school board behavior will be compared with non-Southern decisional behavior.

The Study

The data for this study were collected in 1975 at the Convention of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) as part of a joint research effort supported by Eastern Kentucky University and NSBA. Self-administered questionnaires were randomly distributed by NSBA staff members to board members and superintendents attending various small-group, clinic sessions of the convention. This procedure generated a sample of 1091 school board members and 116 superintendents. The findings

reported here are based on the sample of board members only. This sample is clearly not a true random sample but an inspection of the respondents' demographic characteristics suggests that the sample is representative of school board members across the United States. Included in the sample are respondents from every state representing a wide variety of school districts and reflecting a broad spectrum of age, education, and experience levels.

For purposes of this study, "South" is defined to include the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Information on the states which are included in the other regional designations -- East, Midwest, and West -- is available from the authors.

Representation and Representativeness

In this section, we consider three distinct features of boards of education all relating to the themes of representation and representativeness. One issue in this area which has received considerable attention in recent years is the degree of underrepresentation of women in various positions in government, business, and education. Women historically have had difficulty gaining membership on boards of education, either by appointment or by election.[12] Some critics have noted this apparent sexual exclusivity and have accused school boards of adopting informal quota systems in order to limit the numbers of women serving on a given board.[13]

While most recent studies of school board demographic characteristics have estimated the percentage of women board members in the United States at slightly more than 10%, our sample of board members included 21% women. Respondents were asked how many women served on their board and the responses indicated that

approximately one-third of the boards had no women, about one-third had one woman member, and the remaining one-third had more than one woman on the board. Regional differences, however, were striking (see Table 1). Substantially more board members in the South compared to other regions reported that there were no women members serving on their school boards. Many would suggest that this reflects the political culture of the South, which has seemed to discourage women from seeing themselves in political (electoral) roles and has also hindered their chances for success when they do attempt to run for office.

Another possible explanation for the regional differences in proportion of females could be the size of the board. Since most Eastern boards are larger (usually 9 members), there would be a greater liklihood of more women members. Most Southern boards have 5 or 7 members, Western boards usually have five members, while most Midwestern boards average 7 members. Since there is still a substantial disparity between Southern and Western boards, even though the latter are as small or smaller than the former, we assume that size is not as important as culture and attitude in explaining the underepresentation of women on Southern school boards.[14]

To assess Southern and non-Southern board members' personal views of representation, we have used the familiar delegate-trustee representational role dichotemy popularized by Wahlke and Eulau. As noted earlier, board members clearly prefer the trustee role to the delegate role; in this sample 72% of the respondents indentified themselves as trustees while 28% opted for the delegate role.[15] The regional differences are shown in Table 2. In this case the differences are not nearly as striking, but data show that Southern board members prefer the trustee role to a slightly greater degree than do the board members from other regions. While these differences are not statistically significant, they do suggest at least a tendency for Southern board members to place less emphasis than their non-Southern colleagues on the need to represent a constituency.

Table 1

Region and Number of Women
On The School Board

	East	Midwest	South	West
No Women	23.4% (60)*	25.4% (114)	41.4% (75)	26.6% (41)
One Woman	32.4 (83)	38.5 (173)	30.9 (56)	44.2 (68)
Two or More Women	44.1 (113)	36.1 (162)	27.6 (50)	29.2 (45)
	99.9% (256)	100.0% (449)	99.9% (181)	100.0% (154)

*Number of Respondents $\chi^2=30.775$ $p<.001$

Table 2

Region and Representational Role

	East	Midwest	South	West
Delegate	26.2% (64)*	29.6% (128)	24.3% (43)	30.6% (45)
Trustee	73.8 (180)	70.4 (304)	75.7 (134)	69.4 (102)
	100.0% (244)	100.0% (432)	100.0% (177)	100.0% (147)

*Number of Respondents $\chi^2=2.652$ (n.s.)

In addition to the delegate-trustee item, we asked board members respondents another question relating to their view of representation. They were asked whether the school board functioned more like a corporation board of trustees or like a legislature. The question was worded as follows:

> There are two main points of view about the role of a school board. Which of these two views comes closest to your own view?
>
> (1)____ A school board is <u>like a corporation board of trustees</u>. It acts to set general goals. Periodically it reviews with staff the status of the institution. Its members generally act as a team to support the work of the institution.
>
> (2)____ A school board is <u>like a legislature</u>. It acts to create the best policies, through open debate. It watches vigilantly the progress of its policies. Each member acts as a representative or 'ombudsman' for a constituency.

On this item, board members were much more closely divided, with a small majority (52%) favoring the <u>legislative</u> role. As political scientists, we believe that this role orientation provides a more realistic prespective, and we were pleased that so many of the respondents agreed with us. The regional differences again were not striking here with the distribution for Southern and Midwestern board members very close to the average for the entire sample. Western board members were slightly more favorable to the legislature role while Eastern board members were less favorable; in fact, the Eastern board members had a very small majority favoring the board of trustees option. This item, then, reveals a representational orientation among Southern board members both more in the "mainstream" of national thinking as well as more politically realistic. On this particular question, at least, a majority of Southern board members are willing to concede that their decision-making does have a political component and that they do, in fact, have representational obligations.

Access to Groups and the Public

In this section, we examine a question closely related to representation -- how accessible to the public and to interest group representatives are the school board and its decision-making process? One very basic way to answer this question is to consider when and where school board meetings are held. School boards have been criticized in the past for holding their meetings at certain places so as to discourage attendance by "average" citizens. For example, in some areas, board meetings are held in the morning or afternoon, during working hours, at a location in or near the superintendant's office, which is often some distance from many neighborhoods. To counter this criticism, a recent trend has been to hold school board meetings at night and to vary the location of the meeting so that at some meetings are held in "neighborhood schools." However, our data revealed that Southern school boards have been more hesitant than non-Southern boards to follow this trend. That is, Southern respondents were least likely to report the practice of varying the meeting location. Using this indicator, then, we would have to judge Southern school boards as less accessible than boards in other regions.

While the meetings of Southern school boards are less accessible than in other regions the issue of the accessibility of school board members and Southern school board members in particular merits separate attention. Indeed, the question of political accessibility focuses on the ease of access to both political institutions and to political actors. Thus, the data generated in response to two questions about the relationship of individual school board members to interest groups is particularly relevant for an analysis of their political accessibility. Specifically these questions sought to determine both the frequency of board members' efforts to personally seek support for their position from groups and the frequency of contact from community groups seeking the support of school board members.

Clearly the issues of political accessibility and representational role adopted by policial actors are interdependent phenomena. One might reasonably expect, therefore, that there would be a direct relationshp between a preference for the "Trustee" role and a diminished level of political accessibility, at least as to the extent that interaction with interest groups defines representational role. This expectation is confirmed by our data in that nationally the vast majority of school board members, seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents, identified with the "Trustee" role and, as Table 3 indicates, less than sixteen percent (16%) of the respondents reported that they often sought support from interest groups.

The high level of preference for the "Trustee" role across the regions and the fact that in the South the preference for this representational role is not significantly greater than the other regions might suggest that the frequency of efforts of school board members to gain group support would not vary significantly among the regions. The data in Table 3, however, point out that this is not in fact the case. Southern school board members, when compared to their colleagues from other regions, were least likely to report that they either never or rarely attempted to gain support from community groups. The differences in the distribution of responses represented in Table 3 are statistically significant. ($X^2 = 13.939$; $p < .05$)

If board member-initiated contact with community groups represents one aspect of political accessibility than group-initiated contact represents the "other side of the coin." Table 4 presents the data about this aspect of the political accessibility of school board members. The first thing which a comparison of Tables 3 and 4 demonstrates is that school board members from all regions report that community groups are more likely to contact them than they are to contact these groups. Yet, significantly, Southern school board members were most likely

Table 3

Region and Frequency of Efforts
To Gain Group Support

	East	Midwest	South	West
Try To Gain Group Support				
Often	16.0% (40)*	11.7% (52)	19.4% (36)	19.9% (30)
Sometimes	35.6 (89)	39.9 (178)	43.0 (80)	35.1 (53)
Rarely or Never	48.4 (121)	48.4 (216)	37.6 (70)	45.0 (68)
	100.0% (250)	100.0% (446)	100.0% (186)	100.0% (151)

*Number of Respondents $\chi^2=13.939$ $p<.05$

Table 4

Region and Frequency of
Contact by Groups

	East	Midwest	South	West
Contacted by Groups				
Often	23.4% (60)*	14.2% (63)	28.0% (52)	16.3% (25)
Sometimes	50.4 (129)	56.0 (249)	51.1 (95)	58.8 (90)
Rarely or Never	26.2 (67)	29.9 (133)	21.0 (39)	24.8 (38)
	100.0% (256)	100.1% (445)	100.1% (186)	99.9% (153)

*Number of Respondents $\chi^2=19.954$ $p<.01$

to describe the frequency of community groups contacting them as occuring often. The cross-regional differences in Table 4 are statistically significant ($X^2 = 19.954, p<.01$). It appears, then, that school board members, and Southern school board members in particular, are frequently exposed to some of the tactics of interest group politics.

Are there identifiable characteristics of politics in the South which help to explain these regional differences? The pehnomenon of what has been termed job-oriented politics may provide part of the answer. John H. Fenton, for example, has noted that rarely in job oriented politics will an interest group become ". . . part of a job-oriented political party. Rather it attempts to influence public policy through lobbying activities in the legislature, executive, and judicial branches of government."[16] Thus, in this political style, at least with respect to political parties, there is a tendency for organized interests to seek direct access with individual political actors. In assessing the potential sources of executive power in state government Thomas R. Dye has noted that "in the one-party states of the South. . .with their rural economies, lower family incomes, and poorly educated work forces, state jobs look most attractive."[17] The South as an identifiable region would seem particularly compatible with job-oriented politics and, as our data indicate with respect to school board politics, an area of the country where political accessibility on the individual level is particularly marked.

Thus, with respect to the issue of political accessibility it appears that the practice of educational politics in the South as an identifiable region is significantly different from other regions. While respondents from all regions indicate that organized groups contact them as board members about school issues more often than they contact these groups, the frequency of such contact for

both dimensions is substantially different in the South compared to other regions. Also, with respect to accessibility of board meetings the situation in the South is different than the case in other regions. However, on this indicator of accessibility we find Southern school boards to be somewhat less accessible than is the case across the country.

Decision-Making Style

In examining the actual process of school board decision-making, we will consider two important characteristics of decisional behavior — internal conflict and the distribution of authority between the board and the superintendent. Conflict, of course, is an important variable in the study of decision-making, especially for scholars in the field of legislative and judicial behavior. We consider school boards to be legislative bodies, and many of the concepts and findings of legislative research are applicable to the study of school boards, e.g., the representational role concept used earlier. In considering conflict on boards of education, the Eulau research on city councils in the San Francisco Bay Area is particularly helpful. Eulau measured group conflict and found it to be associated with other important group characteristics such as co-sponsorship, respect, and affect.[18]

We have operationalized the conflict variable in our study using a measure very similar to Eulau's definition of decisional conflict. A board is defined as bipolar, when there are consistent, identifiable blocs on the board, unipolar, when there is little or no conflict, or nonpolar, when there is conflict without any consistent pattern.[19] We have added an additional fourth category, concealed, which defines a situation where conflict is present but it is not manifested in the voting behavior of the board.[20]

The levels of conflict of school boards in the four regions are shown in Table 5. The relatively small proportion of unipolar boards, except in the West, is somewhat suprising. As discussed earlier, many writings for school board members argue for a "no-conflict" norm of behavior on boards of education.[21] It is clear from Table 5 that conflict is most prevalent in the East; this may partly reflect the strong two-party tradition in the East which might be expected to have impact even on decision-making bodies which are ostensibly and legally non-partisan.

The most meaningful characteristic of Southern school boards related to conflict is the high proportion of boards (35.5%) with concealed conflict. Why would so many school boards feel compelled to conceal intra-group disagreements? Several reasons have been suggested. By voting unanimously, a school board conceals from the public any of the arguments which might have been made against the decision.[22] Relatedly, as Philip Meranto has pointed out, any significant amount of controversy tends to undermine the claim of professional expertise on the part of school administrators.[23] This professional expertise, which is an enduring theme in so much of the literature of educational administration, will be examined again in our discussion below of board-superintendent power relationships. Finally, school administrators and board members seem to fear that conflict, if not concealed, will weaken the public's confidence in the schools, thus endangering financial support.[24] As Meranto has written:

> Since virtually every school district must at some time or another seek public approval of a bond issue or referendum, educators are understandably anxious to present an image of consensus rather than disagreement on the expert operation of the schools.[25]

It appears from our findings that Southern boards are more willing to accept these arguments about the dangers of conflict, and thus adopt concealment as a decisional strategy, than boards in other regions. We believe that boards,

Table 5

Region and School Board Conflict

	East	Midwest	South	West
Unipolar	17.6% (45)*	29.4% (132)	29.6% (55)	37.7% (58)
Concealed	20.7 (53)	30.7 (138)	35.5 (66)	27.9 (43)
Nonpolar	54.7 (140)	35.6 (160)	32.3 (60)	33.8 (52)
Bipolar	7.0 (18)	4.2 (19)	2.7 (5)	0.6 (1)
	100.0% (256)	99.9% (449)	100.1% (186)	100.0% (154)

*Number of Respondents $\chi^2=56.180$ $p<.001$

Southern and non-Southern, which choose to adopt such a strategy are shortsighted and unrealistic. Besides being fundamentally dishonest, this kind of behavior not only reflects a basic distruct of the public, but also stiffles the opportunity for genuine communication between citizens and boards on important educational issues.[26] We would argue that boards which conceal conflict will, at least in the long run, create more public relations problems than they solve.

Our final topic of discussion is the distribution of power between school boards and superintendents. It was mentioned previously that in our earlier study of school boards in two Southern states, we found a clear pattern of superintendent-dominance in the decision-making process. While in this study we used a slightly different question to measure this characteristic, the results were very similar. The wording of the questionnaire item, and the responses for all regions, are presented in Table 6. It is clear from these data that most board members expect their superintendents to act in the most crucial areas of educational decision-making without even bringing these actions to the board's attention. This is true in the areas of hiring teachers, curriculum decisions, choosing textbooks, teaching methods, and student discipline. Legally school boards are empowered to make such decisions on behalf of the public. While school boards, like other legislative bodies, might be expected to delegate their implementation to professional administrators, these data suggest that many boards are most willing to delegate the decisions themselves.[27]

From Table 6, it appears that school boards are more involved in decisions involving taxes and budgets, teacher contracts, hiring administrators, transportation, new buildings, and attendance boundries. Norman Kerr has shown how and why school board members' attention and efforts have been "channeled" by administrators into these decisional areas, many of which are more routine and thus "safer" from the administrator's point of view. However, even in these areas,

Table 6

Superintendent -- Board Division of Responsibility

In which areas listed below does your school board expect the supertendent usually would bring decisions to the board? In which areas does the board expect that the superintendent would act without bringing decisions to the board?

	Number Responding	Usually a Board Decision	Usually a Supt./Staff Decision	Both
School budget and school taxes	1020	87.6%	9.8%	2.5%
Teacher salaries and contracts	1011	87.3	11.0	1.7
Which teachers to hire	1031	19.1	77.9	3.0
Hiring principals and superintendents	1021	81.4	12.6	6.0
What subjects to teach	1002	20.0	76.4	3.6
What textbooks to use	1015	14.9	81.5	3.6
What teaching methods to use	1006	6.7	90.8	2.6
Providing transportation	998	51.0	45.9	3.1
Building new schools and facilities	1013	93.5	3.4	3.2
Changing school attendance boundaries	973	78.7	17.8	3.5
Maintaining student discipline	1015	10.3	85.4	4.2*

* Some percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding

it is clear from other research that the decisional norm in most cases is for the board to unquestioningly accept the superintendent's recommendation. For example, after studying several Chicago-area school boards, David Minar concluded that most boards pass favorably (and unanimously) on almost every recommendation made by the superintendent.[28]

In order to compare school boards across regions on this dimension, we constructed an "index of involvement" from the responses presented in Table 6, by computing the total number of decisional areas each respondent said were brought before his board.[29] These findings are reported in Table 7. These data indicate that school boards in the East tend to have the greatest involvement in decision-making, while Southern and Western boards are least involved, i.e., most dominated by their superintendents. There is an obvious similarity here between the regional differences on the involvement dimension and the conflict dimension. In any case, most superintendents in both the South and West appear to be in dominant positions vis à vis their boards, especially in the crucial instructional-related areas. It would thus follow from these findings that Southern and Western school boards could be described in the same terms that Norman Kerr used more than ten years ago to describe school boards which he had observed.[30] He characterized school boards as "agencies of legitimation," legitimizing the action of the administration to the community rather than representing the desires of the community to the administration. Our hope and recommendation would be that school boards which fit this description would seek to re-establish their legal and legitimate authority to make policy for their school districts.[31]

Table 7

Region and School Board Involvement
In Decision-Making

	East	Midwest	South	West
Involvement				
Low	9.6% (24)*	18.2% (80)	27.8% (50)	30.3% (46)
Moderate	55.8 (140)	54.9 (241)	53.9 (97)	47.3 (72)
High	34.7 (87)	26.9 (118)	18.3 (33)	22.4 (34)
	100.1% (251)	100.0% (439)	100.0% (180)	100.1% (152)

*Number of Respondents $\chi^2=41.567$ $p<.001$

Conclusions

Generally, we have found that school board politics in the South is different from that found in other regions in a number of important ways:

1. Women are less well-represented on Southern school boards than in other regions.

2. There is a smaller proportion of "delegates" on Southern boards than on non-Southern boards.

3. School boards meetings are less accessible in the South.

4. School board members in the South both initiate contact with and are contacted by group representatives more often than their non-Southern counterparts.

5. Conflict on Southern school boards is more concealed than on non-Southern boards.

6. Southern school boards tend to be less involved than non-Southern boards in substantive decision-making. Along with Western school boards, Southern boards are more clearly dominated by superintendents than in other regions.

These findings, like so much of Southern politics, seem to be both somewhat contradictory and yet quite consistent with other studies of political behavior in the South. For example, some of the findings suggest an open and responsive style of representation (vis à vis groups) while other findings are reflective of a more traditional, unresponsive view of politics (representation of women, structure of conflict).

While it is clear that more research needs to be conducted to answer some of the questions which have emerged here, it seems to us that the findings of this study suggest at least two things are happening to Southern board members. Like other board members around the country, they seem increasingly to be realizing the political character of their roles and functions as school board members. As this is happening however, their behavioral patterns have taken on

some of the characteristics long associated with regional politics in the South. It is equally clear, of course, that those political characteristics are also experiencing much change throughout the "new South."

In any case, our hope as political scientists is that Southern school boards, along with their non-Southern counterparts, will seek to re-establish their legitimate and legal authority to make policy and, in so doing, that they will move in the direction of being more genuinely representative of the public they serve. Only as school boards move in these directions will they begin to resolve the many serious and significant problems which confront education at the local level.

NOTES

[1]For example, see Archie R. Dykes, School Board and Superintendent: Their Effective Working Relationships (Danville, Ill.: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1965), pp. 106-17; Michael P. Thomas, "Interaction Process Analysis of Administrator - School Board Relationships" (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1960).

[2]Sociological research is most clearly applied to school boards in Neal Gross, et. al., Explorations in Role Analysis (New York: John Wiley, 1958); see also David Rogers, 110 Livingston Street: Politics and Bureaucracy in the New York City School System (New York: Random House, 1968).

[3]One of the earliest studies is Thomas H. Eliot, "Toward an Understanding of Public School Politics," American Political Science Review, 53 (December, 1959). A recent comprehensive study is L. Harmon Zeigler and M. Kent Jennings, Governing American Schools (North Scituate, Mass.: Duxbury Press, 1974).

[4]Jennings and Zeigler, Governing American Schools.

[5]Peter J. Cistone (ed.), Understanding School Boards (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1975.)

[6]Paul D. Blanchard and Robert L. Kline, "Decision-Making: School Boards from a political perspective," Journal of Political Science, forthcoming, 1979.

[7]See the Eliot article cited earlier; see also Norman D. Kerr, "The School Board as an Agency of Legitimation," Sociology of Education, 38 (Fall, 1964).

[8]John C. Wahlke, et. al., The Legislative System (New York: John Wiley 1962).

[9]Philip J. Meranto, School Politics in the Metropolis (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1970).

[10]Paul D. Blanchard, "The Divided School Board: Myths and Realities," American School Board Journal, forthcoming, 1977.

[11]Zeigler and Jennings, pp. 223-227.

[12]Approximately 90% of all school board members are elected.

[13]Dale Mann, "School Boards and Power in Local Communities," in Understanding School Boards, p. 166.

[14]For a discussion of the discriminatory attitudes toward women board members, as well as the impact of women in the school board decision-making process, see Blanchard, "Women in Public Education: The Impact of Female School Board Members," Journal of Humanics, forthcoming, 1977.

[15]This was a forced-choice questionnaire item which was worded as follows: There are two main points of view about how a school board member should act when making a decision. Which of these two views comes closest to your own view?
(1)____ Vote as the public wants, regardless of personal conviction.
(2)____ Vote one's own conviction, regardless of what the public may want.

[16]John H. Fenton, People & Parties in Politics (Glenview, Ill: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1966), p. 73.

[17]Thomas R. Dye, Politics in States and Communities (3rd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p. 175.

[18]Heinz Eulau, "The Informal Organization of Decisional Structures in Small Legislative Bodies," Midwest Journal of Political Science, 13 (August, 1969).

[19]Ibid., pp. 347-50.

[20]The question read:
Generally, on an issue of importance, how does your board vote? (Check one)
(1)____Unanimously, because the board members agree.
(2)____Unamimously, despite disagreement among board members.
(3)____A split vote, because of specific beliefs about the issue.
(4)____A split vote, because of consistent long-run disagreements within the board.

[21]Meranto, especially Chapter 1.

[22]Kerr, pp. 53-54.

[23]Meranto, p. 12.

[24]Ibid., p. 11; see also Eliot, pp. 1041-42.

[25]Meranto, pp. 11-12.

[26]See Blanchard, "The Divided Board. . . ."

[27]James A. Mecklenburger, "Ten Ways School Boards are Cooking Their Own. . .," American School Board Journal, 163 (November, 1976).

[28]David W. Minar, Educational Decision-Making in Suburban Communities (Washington: U.S. Office of Education, 1966).

[29]Responses varied from 1 to 11; Respondents checking 1-4 items were classified "low", 5-6, "moderate," and 7 or more, "high".

[30]See note 7 above.

[31]See our article in Journal of Political Science, cited earlier.